

Message Text

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S/S - MR. BORG

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 165914

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, TU, US

SUBJECT: LEGISLATIVE ACTION ON TURKISH EMBARGO

1. TURKISH AMBASSADOR ESENBEL CALLED ON UNDERSECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS SISCO JULY 14 FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATIVE SITUATION ON TURKISH ARMS EMBARGO. ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN AND AMBASSADOR MACOMBER ALSO ATTENDED MEETING.

2. AMBASSADOR ESENBEL SAID HE HAD RECEIVED WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS AND TALKED OVER WEEKEND TO ANKARA BY TELEPHONE WITH FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIALS PREPARING FOR TURKISH NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING ON JULY 16. ANKARA'S POSITION WAS THAT FRASER AMENDMENT WAS UNACCEPTABLE. TURKISH GOVERNMENT AT MINIMUM NEEDED URGENT ANSWERS TO TWO FUNDAMENTAL

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MENTAL QUESTIONS: (A) DID ADMINISTRATION INTEND TO SEEK

ELIMINATION OF FRASER AMENDMENT FROM LEGISLATION NOW BEFORE THE HOUSE, AND (B) WOULD PRESIDENT USE HIS WAIVER AUTHORITY TO MAKE GRANT AID AVAILABLE TO TURKEY? IN THIS CONNECTION, ESENBEL INDICATED THE SECRETARY HAD TOLD HIM THREE WEEKS AGO THAT THE WAIVER WOULD BE AUTHORIZED EITHER IMMEDIATELY AFTER LEGISLATIVE ACTION OR SOME FEW WEEKS THEREAFTER. WAS THIS STILL THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION?

3. UNDERSECRETARY SISCO ACKNOWLEDGED OUR APPRECIATION THAT THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT DID NOT LIKE THE FRASER AMENDMENT. WE, OURSELVES, RECOGNIZED ITS DRAWBACKS, AND WERE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION. THERE WERE TWO POSSIBLE COURSES OPEN: (A) TO TRY TO DO SOMETHING ON THE HOUSE FLOOR OR (B) TO SEEK TO ELIMINATE OR MODIFY THE FRASER AMENDMENT AT THE SENATE-HOUSE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE. UNDERSECRETARY SISCO INDICATED THAT NO DECISION ON HOW BEST TO PROCEED HAD YET BEEN MADE. THE ADMINISTRATION WAS CHECKING WITH KEY CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS THIS WEEK AND WOULD TO SOME EXTENT BE GUIDED BY THEIR PROCEDURAL ADVICE. IN ANY EVENT THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY PLANNED TO CONTINUE THEIR ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN THIS MATTER. WE ALSO INTENDED TO PRESS FOR THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE VOTE ON THE HOUSE FLOOR. WITH RESPECT TO THE FRASER AMENDMENT, THE ADMINISTRATION DID NOT WANT TO ACT IN A PRECIPITOUS MANNER THAT WOULD TEND TO UPSET THE APPLE CART. WE STILL FACED AN UPHILL BATTLE IN THE CONGRESS. THE SITUATION WAS CLEARLY DELICATE, AND NO ONE WANTS TO JEOPARDIZE WHAT WE HAVE ALREADY ACHIEVED, IN SUM, THE ADMINISTRATION WANTS TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION CREATED BY THE FRASER AMENDMENT, IS STUDYING WAYS TO DO SO, BUT HAS NOT YET DECIDED ON A PRECISE COURSE OF ACTION.

4. AMBASSADOR ESENBEL NOTED THAT THE AMENDMENT HAD THE PRACTICAL EFFECT OF MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR TURKEY TO BUY WHAT IT WANTS IN THE US. TURKEY HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY BOUGHT MUCH IN THIS COUNTRY THROUGH COMMERCIAL CHANNELS. MOREOVER TURKEY HAD LITTLE AVAILABLE CASH AND NEEDED THE CREDIT PROVISIONS UNDER THE FMS ACT. ABOVE ALL THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN AWAY THE WATERED DOWN HOUSE VERSION TO ITS OWN PEOPLE, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND THIS LEFT OPEN THE PROSPECT OF SOME VISIBLE TURKISH ACTION AGAINST US FACILITIES IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

5. ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN DESCRIBED HOW THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT COULD CONTINUE, EVEN UNDER THE TERMS OF THE FRASER AMENDMENT, TO MAKE CASH, COMMERCIAL PURCHASES OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN THE US. HARTMAN INDICATED THAT ONLY TWO TYPES OF MANUFACTURED ARTICLES COULD NOT BE

PURCHASED. (A) ITEMS MANUFACTURED IN US ARSENALS OR CONTAINING COMPONENTS MANUFACTURED IN SUCH ARSENALS, FOR EXAMPLE, GUN TUBES FOR ARTILLERY, SOME LARGE AMMUNITION, AND FIRE CONTROL EQUIPMENT FOR ARTILLERY AND TANKS AND (B) ITEMS NOT CURRENTLY MANUFACTURED AND THEREFORE NOT OBTAINABLE AT REASONABLE PRICES FROM COMMERCIAL CHANNELS' IN THIS CATEGORY WOULD BE CERTAIN SIZES OF ARTILLERY AMMUNITION AND SOME SPARE PARTS FOR OLDER NAVAL VESSELS. MR. HARTMAN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT CASH COMMERCIAL SALES WOULD

BE LESS CONVENIENT AND WOULD INVOLVE NEW AND PERHAPS DIFFICULT PROCEDURES. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO HELP IN IDENTIFYING COMMERCIAL SOURCES OF EQUIPMENT THE TURKS WISHED TO BUY AS WELL AS PROVIDE OTHER FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE. HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE REQUIREMENT FOR COMMERCIAL PURCHASES WOULD LAST ONLY A SHORT TIME, ENDING WHEN FMS LEGISLATION FOR FY 76 WAS PASSED.

6. AS FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL WAIVER, BOTH SISCO AND HARTMAN INDICATED THAT THIS WAS AN ACTUAL, NOT A THEORETICAL, POSSIBILITY SHOULD THE FRASER AMENDMENT BE ENACTED, WITH THE WAIVER BEING UTILIZED TO COVER MILITARY ITEMS IDENTIFIED AS BEING UNAVAILABLE THROUGH US COMMERCIAL CHANNELS. HARTMAN ALSO NOTED THAT THE TURKS' NEED FOR CREDIT MIGHT BE SATISFIED THROUGH NON-US SOURCES, AT PERHAPS SLIGHTLY HIGHER INTEREST RATES. IN SUM, SISCO AND HARTMAN JOINED BY AMBASSADOR MACOMBER, WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE DRAWBACKS OF THE FRASER AMENDMENT AND OUR DETERMINATION TO LOOK FOR WAYS TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION, STRESSED THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE COMMITTEE ACTION IN THE HOUSE LAST WEEK AND THE IMPORTANCE OF TURKISH PATIENCE BETWEEN NOW AND THE TIME LEGISLATION COMES TO A VOTE ON CONFIDENTIAL

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THE HOUSE FLOOR. ANY ACTION IN TURKEY AGAINST OUR FACILITIES NOW COULD SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZE CHANCES FOR FAVORABLE HOUSE ACTION.

7. AMBASSADOR ESENBEL CLOSED THE MEETING BY INDICATING HE WOULD REPORT HIS CONVERSATION WITHOUT EMBELLISHMENT TO ANKARA. HE ACKNOWLEDGED HE WAS SOMEWHAT CONFUSED BY CHANGES IN THE SITUATION WHICH OCCURRED ALMOST DAILY AND WOULD, ACCORDINGLY, NEITHER PUT AN OPTIMISTIC NOR A PESSIMISTIC GLOSS ON WHAT HE HAS BEEN TOLD. WHEN ESENBEL WAS INFORMED AMBASSADOR MACOMBER WAS RETURNING TO ANKARA TONIGHT, THE TURKISH AMBASSADOR SAID WITH A SMILE THAT HE WOULD LEAVE TO MACOMBER THE TASK OF TRYING TO "SELL" THE CURRENT HOUSE LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE TO THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT.

8. AMBASSADOR MACOMBER ACCEPTED THIS ASSIGNMENT, AND HE
AND SISCO REMINDED ESENBEL AGAIN THAT THE HOUSE ACTION
TO DATE REPRESENTED A MAJOR STEP FORWARD AND THAT WHILE
MORE REMAINED TO BE DONE, IT WOULD BE FOOLISH FOR TURKEY
TO LOSE HEART NOW WHEN THE BATTLE WAS SO CLOSE TO BEING
WON. INGERSOLL

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